

The Ryde Recorder

Journal & Newsletter of the Ryde District Historical Society Inc. and Family History Group



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Guides Training Seminar at Willandra, Saturday 29 March 2008
(Photo by Bill Sheather)

All Ryde District Historical Society Inc's Local and General History meetings take place at 8 pm on the second Tuesday of each month (February to November) at historic "Willandra", 770 Victoria Road, cnr Devlin Street, Ryde. Enter by turning left at end of Willandra Street to street parking outside eastern gate of building. Entry door is at rear of building on Victoria Road side (East rear wing).

Most of the Ryde District Historical Society Inc's Family History Group meetings are held at the above address on the second Saturday of each month (Feb-Nov) at 10 am. Call Family History Group Secretary (below) to confirm if not at previous meeting. Society's **Phone Number: (02) 9807 7137** Fridays only (10-3pm) or leave a message at other times.

Editor: Kevin Shaw (9264-8272)
President: Richard Wright (9804-6730)
Secretary: Betty Willis (9809-2212)
FHG Secretary: Shirley Noble (9868-7781)

Ryde District Historical Society is willing to carry out research in its Archives. A fee of \$20 will be charged for reasonable research—if longer the applicant will be advised before the work is carried out. Please forward cheque for this amount with your inquiry. A fee of \$5 will be charged for researchers using the Society's Archives.

PLEASE NOTE: A \$2 donation will be accepted from visitors to the Ryde District Historical Society's meetings. Everyone welcome.

Please note that any conclusions or opinions expressed in the Ryde Recorder are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Ryde District Historical Society Inc

WHAT'S ON?

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Tuesday 13 May | Local History Group meeting at Willandra, starting at 8:00 pm. John Breen, a heritage officer with Sydney Water, will talk to us about a little-known aspect of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. |
| Tuesday 10 June | Local History Group meeting at Willandra, starting at 8:00 pm. Vice-President Margaret Farlow will present a talk about St Charles Borromeo Church. |
| Saturday 14 June | Family History Group Meeting at Willandra, starting at 10:00 am. Members meeting - 5 minute talks by members about their "Brick Walls and Breakthroughs". These meetings can be very valuable if someone else can help you solve your problem. |
| Saturday 14 June | Followed by "A Ticket to Ryde" guides training, starting at Willandra at 1:00 pm. Today's lesson: how to conduct a Bus Tour of Ryde with navigation and commentaries. A minibus has been hired for the day. There may be extra seats available for trainee-guides' partners. Anyone wishing to come (INCLUDING GUIDES) please book with Kevin by speaking to him, ringing 9264-8272 or e-mailing kevinandjanice@ozemail.com.au . Of course, trainee guides will have priority and non-guides will be asked for a donation. |
| Tuesday 8 July | Local History Group meeting at Willandra, starting at 8:00 pm. Social Meeting. |
| Saturday 12 July | Family History Group Meeting at Willandra, starting at 10:00 am. Angela Phippen will address the meeting on using Local Government Records in family history research. |
| Saturday 9 August | Family History Group Meeting at Willandra, starting at 10:00 am. Activity to be announced. |
| Saturday 9 August | Followed by "Ticket to Ryde" guides training for St Charles Borromeo Church and Churchyard. Starting at 1:00 pm. |
| Tuesday 12 August | Local History Group meeting at Willandra, starting at 8:00 pm. Our guest speaker this evening will be Jeremy Steele and he will talk to us about aboriginal languages. |

Ryde's New War Memorial

by Kevin Shaw

The new war memorial in Ryde Park was dedicated on Wednesday 20 February 2008 in a twilight service. The time was chosen so that the guests could experience the electric "flame" that is a feature of the new memorial.

The central feature of the memorial is an object that looks a little like a gun, a little like an aeroplane, a little like a ship and a little like an altar. It points towards the sun at 11:00 in the morning. Inscribed on this object in letters that are lit from below and change colour as you watch is "LEST WE FORGET".

There are two low curved walls behind the monument. On one are shields for the navy, army, air force and merchant navy. On the other are the words "For the Men and Women Who Served".



The original plan had been to re-locate the old memorial from Hatton's Flat. That memorial had been designed by Les Buckland of Parramatta, the architect who also designed the Civic Centre. A feature that most people will remember was the eternal flame, which was powered by gas. When the old memorial was being dismantled, it disintegrated and this required a replacement.

A committee was set up by the local RSLs and with Paul Graham representing the Council of the City of Ryde. This committee completed the job in only a few months; therefore, it is even more to be complimented for the simplicity and eloquence of the new design. The project artists were Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse, and the project was funded by Bellavista Pty Ltd.

The new memorial is on the southern or Blaxland Road side of Ryde Park, to the right of the City of Ryde Bowling Club carpark.

Fire at Meadowbank Shops

by Tina Bean

These are the photos from the fire at Meadowbank shops on the morning of 15 March. The original building was built in the 1920's and the shop that caught fire was the take away shop next to the News Agent. Details of the fire below. The upstairs part of the shop caught fire o at around 5 am. One Indian lady saw the flames and tried to rouse the occupants of the flat above the News Agent. She was having trouble doing this as her English was not very good and nor was the English of the occupants of the flat - these I believe were Chinese.



The Indian lady also rang the fire department. Another man arrived shortly after and between him and the Indian lady they managed to alert the occupants of the flat, who grabbed their stuff and left. The fire department arrived and began to try putting out the fire. By the time they arrived the roof was already well alight and Alex and I could see it over the top of the Station from our house. So we headed up to see what all the excitement was about. Alex and I arrived about the same time as the ninth fire engine arrived and got a great view of them putting out the fire although the flames were not nearly as high by the time we got there.



The fire was very difficult to put out as it appears the electricians to the building kept shorting so they had to cut the wires to the building to stop the flames from reigniting. When the fire was finally put out - about 7.30am - the roof of the original flat that had caught fire had totally collapsed and the shop was ruined. The newsagent shop had large amounts of water damage and had lost large amounts of its stock. The take-away shop below the flat was also totally ruined. At this stage both shops have been boarded up and are not currently in use. Other shops along the strip are still operating. The glow in the window of the above photo is flames.

History: Technology, People, Society -- and Ryde

by John August

When I wonder about the past, I wonder about the different societies, the different people, and the different economies. Nowadays, many dwellings are isolated from industry. In fact, they can be too separated - we talk about "dormitory suburbs".

But in times past, we lived close to industry, it was on our doorstep. And what was that industry? The 1992 book "Then and Now", a collection of photos around Ryde, has a photo of the Halmeg linseed oil extraction plant at Punt Road Gladesville, which closed in 1974. Harold Meggitt established the plant in 1923, and so we see the name of the plant on the silo.



But along the river there were many industries - paint factories, tanneries and even an abattoir. The toxins they generated have found their way to the bottom of the river, and still haunt us. The meat waste from the abattoir attracted sharks upstream - presumably still salty enough for the sharks at that point.

But - Linseed Oil! Important enough to have a factory extracting it! And today, Linseed oil is but another oil, of no particular significance. But it found use in paint, putty, and finishing wooden products. And it can be used in feeds, textiles and treating leathers.

But paint is not just oil based, and makes use of synthetic resins. The world did move on. But what finally made the Halmeg plant close? Problems with pollution of the river, a declining market for linseed oil, or what? It would be interesting to know.

For, back then we had a different economy. At society meetings, I've seen the ceramic containers used to convey ginger beer - proclaiming they were owned by the manufacturer, and should be returned! Once upon a time, we did have returnable bottles, and now the most we do is recycle rather than re-use - but in times past, companies felt the need to own the containers their produce came in! Many things were (in relative terms) "worth" a lot more back then. Particularly containers. Anything you would form into a shape was not cheap - not disposable.

Our world has changed in many ways. But it is amazing to reflect on times past.

New Resources at Ryde Library

by Angela Phippen
Local Studies and Family History Librarian

Recently the library has accessioned new resources that will assist with your genealogical research. These are available in the Family History Section at Ryde Library.

New South Wales

We have purchased a number of electoral rolls so that our collection for the 20th century is as follows: 1903, 1906, 1913, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1925, 1926, 1928, 1935, 1939, 1946, 1950, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980. These are on microfiche and cover all the divisions and sub-divisions in New South Wales. In addition we hold print electoral rolls for later years for the local area which are held in the Local Studies Collection.

Victoria

Some of you may have used the index to assisted and unassisted shipping available on the website of the Public Record Office of Victoria. Once you have found the correct entry on the index you will now be able to follow up any of the entries in the shipping registers themselves.

Available on microfiche are:

- Assisted immigrants from the UK: 1839-1871
- Unassisted immigrants from British ports, 1852-1923 (indicated on the index as 'B') - (we are missing 1890-1899, which is temporarily out of stock at the suppliers)
- Unassisted immigrants from Foreign ports, 1852-1923 (indicated on the index as 'F')
- Unassisted immigrants from New Zealand ports, 1852-1923 (indicated on the index as 'N')

New CD for John and Mary Small Descendants Association

by Janice Eastment

A CD containing all the family data from the original 1988 book by John Pollock, "The Small Family in Australia, 1788-1988" and the 1995 Update Book, plus some information received by the John and Mary Small Descendants Association since 1995, was launched at the 37th Small Family Gathering on 14 October 2007 at Ryde Ex-Services Memorial Club. It is called "The Small Family In Australia 2007", reflecting the title of the original books.

The information is presented in three computer formats: hypertext (HTML) that can be read with web browsers such as Internet Explorer, portable document format (PDF) that can be read with Adobe Acrobat Reader, and Dynamic Family Tree Format (DFT) that needs Java to be installed on the computer. There is more information on the Small Family web site:

<http://smallfamilyDA.googlepages.com> .

The CDs cost \$30 each plus \$5 for handling and postage. They can be obtained by contacting the John and Mary Small Descendants Association through the above web site or by e-mailing directly to small_family@hotmail.com .

SIR KENNETH MALCOLM McCaw

by Margaret McCaw



KENNETH MALCOLM McCaw was born on the 8th October, 1907 at Chatswood, the eldest of six children (three sons & three daughters) of Malcolm Mark McCaw and Jessie Alice HEMPTON. His grandparents were from Scotland and England.

Mark McCaw met Jessie Hempton in the Moree District where she was a teacher – gentle and well educated. They married in St. Paul's Anglican Church, Chatswood, on 20 September 1905. Jessie was born in Goulburn, the fifth child of John Hempton and Ada Victoria Fairland.

Mark and Jessie moved to Warialda in northern New South Wales, where he managed a property called "Rosehill" owned by the Penrose family. He also had a bullock team and carted logs to the nearby sawmill. After a while the family moved to Pallamallawa where Mark carted logs to another sawmill owned by Eve Tomkins. When carting logs one day, they shifted and rolled onto him, crushing him. He died later in hospital on 18 July 1923, leaving Jessie a widow at the age of 40 with 6 children aged from 15 down to 4. Ken left

school; helped as a farm hand at Rosehill and worked at the sawmill for a time until the family eventually moved back to Sydney and lived in a house at Botany owned by Ruth Stoker, Mark's sister.

Ken and his 2 brothers inherited defective eyesight, called *Retinitus pigmentosa* from which they all became totally blind. Because of this eyesight disease, his phenomenally retentive memory enabled him to commit to memory vast amounts of information, especially poetry. Banjo Patterson was one of his favourites and it was a sheer delight to hear him recite these poems, especially *The Man From Snowy River*. Sport was not an option for him, but he was a fine horseman, having learnt to ride at a tender age, and would ride whenever he got the opportunity.

Ken attended night school to gain his Matriculation, whilst working during the day to help with the family finances. After gaining his Matriculation, he became articled to A.O. Ellison and studied to become a Solicitor through the Solicitors' Admission Board. He was admitted as a Solicitor in 1933; was a founder of the firms McCaw, Moray and Co 1935-40; McCaw, Moray & Johnson, 1940-51; McCaw, Johnson & Co. 1951-57; and McCaw, Johnson & Spicer, 1957-65.

Ken entered the New South Wales Legislative Assembly as the Member for Lane Cove in May 1947 and remained so until his retirement in January 1975 – a total of 27 years and 8 months. In 1965 he became the NSW Attorney General and a Queen's Counsel. It was in this position that he brought before the Parliament changes to the Divorce Laws and other Laws which were of benefit to the general public. For his dedication to public life and service to the NSW Parliament he was knighted by the Queen in 1975.

Ken was one of the founders of the United Australia Party, which later became the Liberal Party, of which he was on the State Executive. He was Councillor of the Law Society of NSW from 1945-48;

Governor of the NSW College of Law; President of the Lane Cove District Boy Scouts' Association; President of Lane Cove Legion of ex-Servicemen and Women's Association; vice president and Honorary Solicitor for the Royal Guide Dogs for the Blind Association; a life member of the Royal NSW Blind Society; vice-president of Food for Babies and Good Samaritan Organisation; a member of the Royal Commonwealth Society; a co-patron of Grow; a director of two companies; a lay preacher in the Methodist Church; a member of the Lions Club; a Freemason and a member of The Grand Lodge of NSW.

He was also the author of "People versus Power" which was published in 1977. This book was the culmination of two years of hard work by his second wife Valma and his dedicated secretary of 36 years, Marjory Vincent, who took down dictation, typed it and edited it, making any alterations he required until he was satisfied with the final draft (not always easily achieved). This book was well received and was widely acclaimed as a 'book badly needed for legal studies', filling a gap in Constitutional Law.



*NSW Parliament House about 1960
(from Max Dupain, "Georgian Architecture in Australia", Ure Smith, 1963)*

Ken first married on 16th December 1933, Thea Elizabeth Easterbrook who became his eyes, spending countless hours reading newspapers and other articles which he needed to know about. In turn his family helped in this role, as well as Thea and daughter, Margaret, driving him to various places when he had to make speeches. Ken had a daughter, a son and two grandsons of whom he was very proud. After 33 years of marriage Ken and Thea went their separate ways

Ken married Valma Cherlin on 13th July, 1968 and she became his eyes and chauffeur. Ken developed dementia in later life, which was very debilitating for him. He passed away in Royal North Shore Hospital on 13th September 1989, just short of his 82nd birthday. Valma passed away on 14th July 2003, aged 82. They are both buried in the Field of Mars Cemetery, Ryde, in General Lawn 4, Plots 1935 and 1936 respectively.

01.03.2008

Petitions, Petitions, Petitions!

by Helen Patterson

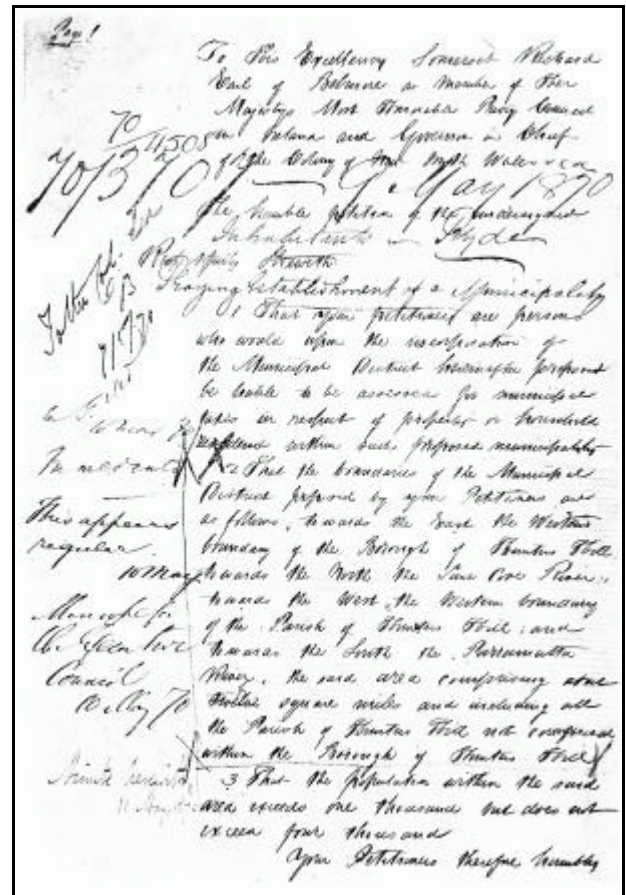
I have found that petitions are a wonderful resource for researching family history and local history. It is such a thrill to see the signature of an ancestor, written over one hundred years ago and still clearly visible on the page. From a local historian's point of view, the signatures on the petitions show a 'who's who' of the local area at that time. I have always been amazed at the number of petitions signed by our NSW forebears in the middle and latter parts of the 19th century. Fortunately, many of these petitions have been retained by the various authorities and are available for viewing and photocopying or downloading.

The main groups of petitions that I have found most useful are:

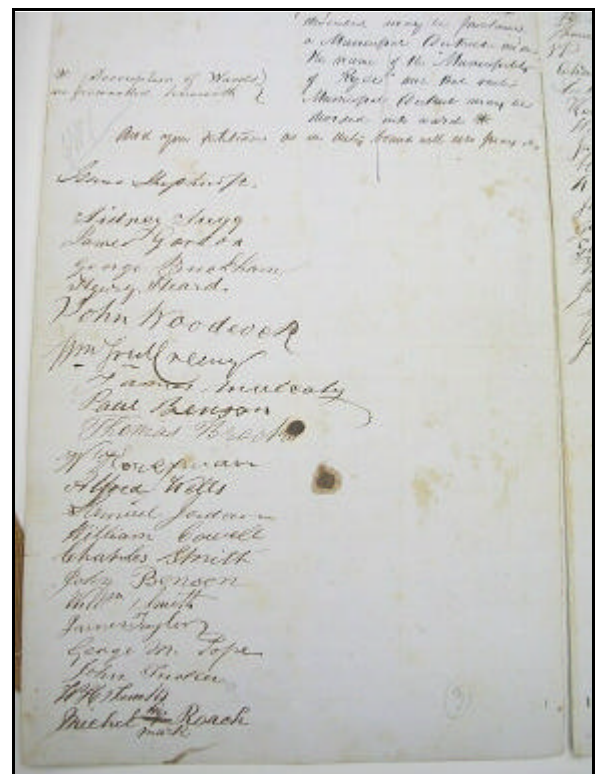
Public School Files at NSW State Records, Kingswood

Under the Public Schools Act of 1866 and the Public Instruction Act of 1880, education in NSW became compulsory for children aged 6 to 14. In order to obtain government funding, three local signatories were obliged to complete an 'Application for the Establishment of a School' and parents of prospective pupils needed to complete the 'Annex to the Application' signing their own names and giving the names and ages of their children who were eligible to enrol.

State Records at Kingswood has these Applications in their school files dating from 1876. I was fortunate to find three generations of my Dorahy ancestors in the Greendale Public School File. Sometimes, the files also contain other petitions such as those of parents petitioning for the removal of an unsatisfactory teacher, as also found in the Greendale file.

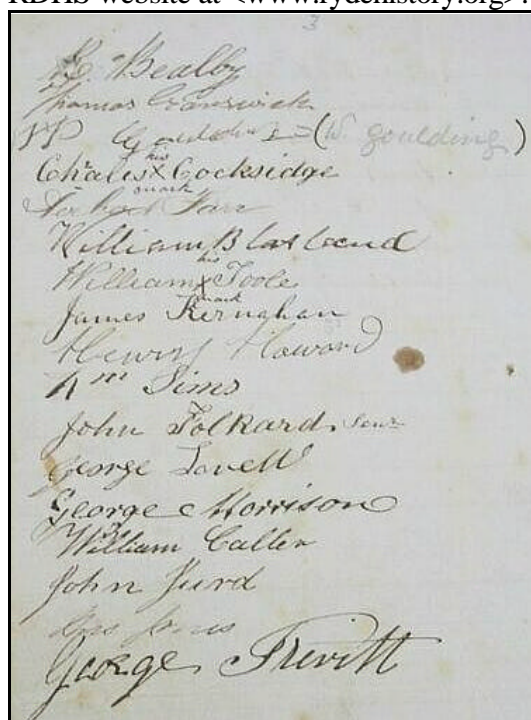


Petitions to Establish a Municipality in Colonial Secretary's Correspondence at NSW State Records, Kingswood

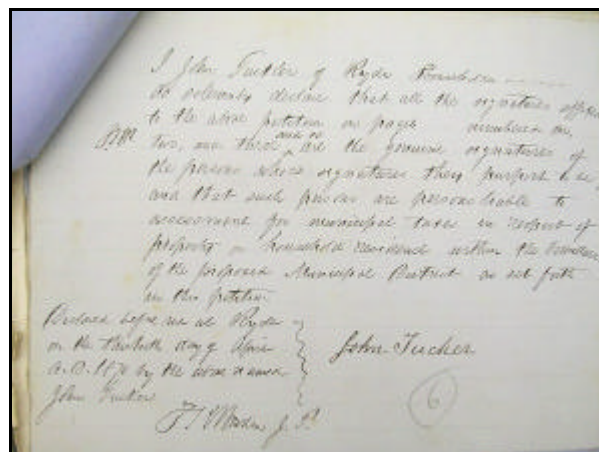


The Municipalities Acts of 1858 and 1867 provided for the establishment of a Municipality following the receipt of a petition of at least 50 householders resident within the proposed area. The petition was to be published in the NSW Government Gazette, and unless a counter petition was received within three months from a larger number of householders, the process of creation of a Municipality could begin. In November 1860, 127 residents of Ryde signed a petition to establish a Municipality, but, in February 1861, 146 residents signed a counter petition and the application lapsed. Some residents signed the petition and also the counter petition! Finally, in June 1870, 200 signatures were obtained and the Municipality of Ryde was proclaimed in November of that year.

The names on the lists include the well-known identities of Ryde as well as their sometimes-illiterate fellow residents who signed with an 'X' and had to have their mark witnessed. The petitions have survived intact with all the original signatures and can be found in the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence Files at State Records at Kingswood. Photocopies of the correspondence can be viewed in the files of Ryde District Historical Society at 'Willandra' and at Ryde Library Local Studies Collection. An alphabetical list of all the names on all three petitions can be found on the RDHS website at <www.rydehistory.org>.



S. Kealey
 Thomas Conserve
 W. Goulding
 Charles Cockesidge
 William B. Latland
 William Toole
 James Kerrigan
 Henry Howard
 A. M. Sims
 John F. Richards
 George Lovell
 George Harrison
 William Cullen
 John Furd
 George Smith



John Tucker of Ryde
 the proposed Municipal District
 John Tucker
 J. M. Smith

Post Office Files at National Archives of Australia, Chester Hill

Residents of localities wishing to establish a Post Office in their area gathered signatures and forwarded those petitions to the Postmaster-General for approval. They also signed petitions for seemingly petty matters - they may have disliked the current Postmaster and wanted his removal or disagreed with the location of the office. These petitions can be found in the SP32/1 Post Office Files at Chester Hill. Some of the Files have been digitised and can be viewed online through the NAA Record Search at <www.naa.gov.au> (e.g., Parramatta North PO is now online).

Local Sources

In addition to the above sources there are often local repositories that hold copies of petitions. The Ryde Council Correspondence Files held by the Ryde District Historical Society contain petitions for sundry matters such as amalgamation of Dundas and Eastwood Municipalities in 1922; alteration of the boundaries of Ryde and Hunters Hill Municipalities in 1926; a petition against nightsoil scavenging in North Ryde in 1939; a plea for public conveniences in Gladesville in 1944; and a petition for a proposed bus route along Vimiera Rd in 1949.

They Stayed, Moved On, and Stayed Again

by Richard Wright

The following information was largely obtained from Eric Clancy's book "The Overflow of Clancy" (1979). Eric, who was for many years the archivist for the Uniting Church, did the major research into the Clancy family and this inspired me to bring my branch of the Clancy family up to date and to research the other families I am linked to.

My grandfather, Richard Patrick Clancy, was born on 4 September 1886, in St Kilda, Victoria. He was the eldest child of Richard Patrick Clancy and Mary Connolly, who were married in Dublin, Ireland, on 30 September 1885.

My great grandfather (also Richard Patrick Clancy) was born in Melbourne on 16 October 1842 and was the first Australian born member of my Clancy family. His parents were Thomas Clancy and Anne née Kirby. By 1884, Richard Snr was a storekeeper in Booligal, NSW. He received news that he was an executor, along with Patrick Connolly of Limerick, to the will of his aunt, Mary Teresa Clancy of Bridgetown, Ireland. Mary had died on 8 December 1883 and was the widow of Richard's Uncle John Clancy. Richard was thus under an obligation to travel to Ireland, which he did in early 1885.

While in Ireland, Richard met Mary Connolly; the courtship was very brief and, as already mentioned, they were married in Dublin in September. Richard and Mary returned to Melbourne on the *Iberia* in April 1886. According to the Victorian Public Record Office record, Mr R P Clancy was 40 and Mrs Clancy was 38 (Fiche 466, p 14). They settled in St Kilda, where Richard Jnr was born on 4 September 1886 (RN 22362) and their second child, John Henry, was born on 13 May 1888 (RN 15986).

After John was born, the family moved to the Gladstone Goldfields in Queensland, where Richard Snr and his brother Thomas began gold mining. They were initially owners of a battery that crushed ore for a number of miners; as an area ceased to be profitable, the miners moved on and so the battery was moved, too. Richard appears to have continued the crushing plant side of mining, either with Thomas or in partnership with other men.



A stamper crushing battery at Burra (www.fgcsa.bigpondhosting.com, 2 May 2008)

Richard and Thomas, with their families, stayed in the Gladstone area for most of the 1890s. However, Richard, Mary and the boys returned to Victoria briefly in the early part of the decade and it

was at Glenorchy, near Stawell, that their only daughter, Alice Mary Catherine, was born on 20 July 1892. The family then returned to Gladstone where their fourth child, Thomas Joseph, was born on 14 June 1896 (Qld RN C4618).

Sometime in late 1897 or early 1898, Thomas, Richard (Snr) and their families moved to Mount Morgan and it was here that they were to spend the next twenty years or so. Gold was discovered at Mount Morgan in 1882, as well as silver and copper. The open cut mine was the deepest man-made cutting in Australia (320 metres deep and nearly a kilometre in length). The brothers continued their mining operations in Mount Morgan.

Richard Jnr completed his schooling while at Mount Morgan and then took up tertiary studies at the Mount Morgan Technical College. In 1902, he passed with honours a shorthand course in the Department of Business. In 1905, he passed a book-keeping examination set by the Institute of Accountants of Central Queensland; his mark was 105 out of a possible 110. In the same year, he passed the Book-keeping, Stage 1, examination with the Technical College, also with honours. In 1907, he passed the examination for Modern Business Methods, Stage 2. (I understand that my grandfather did the technical college courses and examinations by correspondence; his certificates in my possession all originate from Brisbane but state that the courses were done at Mount Morgan.)

While completing his tertiary education part-time, he took on a job at the Mount Morgan Mine as a clerk. Sometime during this period, Richard met Agnes Hunter McLean. Agnes was born on 21 December 1886 at Mosscastle, Parish of Slamanan, Scotland, the only daughter of Charles and Jane McLean. The McLean family migrated to Queensland in 1887 per *Bulimba*, arriving in Rockhampton in March of that year (Qld State Archives Ref. IMM/122, p 53).

Richard and Agnes were married at the Roman Catholic Presbytery in Mount Morgan on 25 March 1911 (RN C2404). Their four children were born in Mount Morgan: Richard Patrick in 1911 (RN C9164), Edward Charles in 1913 (RN C10592), John Manus in 1916, and my mother Jessica Agnes in 1919.

My grandfather did not enlist in World War 1 (1914-1918) but his brothers John and Thomas did. John was killed at Gallipoli; Thomas served at Gallipoli and the western front and returned to Queensland after the war. However, Richard was a strong supporter of the allied cause, both in this war and the Second World War (1939-1945).

After the First World War, the Mount Morgan mines began to go into decline. Richard, Agnes and their children moved to Brisbane about 1920, where Richard became a chartered accountant with the firm of J B Chandler, electrical contractors. They moved to Sydney in the late 1920s and settled at Coogee. When the family arrived in Sydney, Richard set up his own accounting business at 34 Martin Place. He stayed in this business until the mid-1930s, when the Depression forced him to look for other work.

Richard firstly became an accountant with S Hoffnung and Co. Ltd, 157 Clarence Street; the company operated as a general merchant and one could obtain just about anything, from confectionery to sewing machines, from their premises. He later worked for Marquis Mouldings (which later became Commonwealth Mouldings Pty Ltd in the early 1940s). Located at 242 Princes Highway, Arncliffe, this company manufactured plastic goods such as picnic sets and the like. Richard was working here at the time of his death.

Richard's wife Agnes returned to Mount Morgan during 1939 as she was terminally ill; she died at her mother's home on 3 February 1940. Richard saw his life out at Coogee, where he died on 10 July 1945 (Randwick RN 20263).

The Family History Group of Ryde District Historical Society:

a brief history by Kevin Shaw

The idea for the Family History Group (FHG) as a sub-group of the Ryde District Historical Society (RDHS) came from the president of 1987 and 1988, Anthony Duignan. Julie Dawson and I liked the idea and developed it. Julie had been a family historian before she was a Ryde historian and my genealogical researches about Ryde people had turned me into a family historian. A number of other members were enthusiastic as well, including Doug and Olive Conley and Fred and Elva Charlier.

It was decided to call a public meeting for 2:00 pm at Willandra on Saturday 25 June 1988 to gauge the depth of support for a family history group in the general public of the Ryde area. As a Cumberland Press journalist, the Charlies' daughter-in-law Ann was able to publicise this first meeting in the Northern District Times and there was a similar article in The Weekly Times as well.

The inaugural meeting was very positive. It decided on a time for subsequent meetings, namely the second Saturday of most months at 10:00 am. The motto of the group was "helping Ryde people with their family history" rather than "doing Ryde family history"; the latter was to remain the preserve of the main group of the Society. However, it was also decided that FHG members were to be full members of the RDHS, with the same subscriptions as everyone else. If there was any resentment about this arrangement, I never heard anything about it and it became a model for a number of other historical societies, even quite large ones like Parramatta and Ku-ring-gai.

Megan Martin, Ryde's Local Studies Librarian, gave a short address on the genealogical resources in Ryde Library. Julie Dawson was elected FHG Secretary and I was elected Chairman and we were commissioned with organising the first regular meeting on 13 August. Once again this was publicised by both local newspapers on 10 August and there was a roll-up of twenty-six people, including Joan Harrison, Mary Cadman, Gwenyth Oake, Lorraine Prothero, Bill Wilson, Dorothy Heber, Don Whitham, Elva Charlier, Robyn Hogen, Pat Hancox, Clover Wilson, Roslyn Sutherland, Doug and Olive Conley, Shirley Noble, Ron and Heather Freeman, Anthony Duignan, Dorothy Brown, Edith Turner, June Ball, Margaret Torrens, and M Holmes.

The guest speaker for the first meeting was Janice Brooks of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints. She spoke of the resources of the LDS or Mormon libraries and their locations in the Sydney metropolitan region. This was a wonderful start for the group as these libraries are still amongst the most powerful resources of family historians researching overseas.

The September meeting agreed to have a Gazette as a separate supplement to the Ryde Recorder and Lorraine Prothero volunteered to edit it. This supplement survived for several years but was eventually absorbed into the Recorder with a general agreement that there would be articles of interest to family historians in every issue.

On Saturday 10 December, the FHG began a tradition of replacing some meetings with outings to libraries and archives so that members could learn about resources and do some research in company. The first visit was to the search room of the State Archives at Globe Street in The Rocks. In those days, the present State Records was called the Archives Authority and there were primary records available for reading at Globe Street. Now, of course, there are only printed books, microfilms and microfiche. Seventeen members and four non-members attended this seminar.

Another tradition that started very early and has continued to this day were the "mutual help" workshops that are held on alternate months. These are based on the conviction that the accumulated wisdom of all the members of the group is often more valuable than the imported wisdom of guest speakers. If people are willing to stand up and tell the meeting about some problem they are having in their research, described often as a "roadblock" or a "brick wall", there is usually someone present

who can help with making a breakthrough. It is part of the excitement of coming to the FHG meetings.

Another valuable part of the FHG is the way it publicises to its members the latest research aids, books and other resources for family history research. Of course, in the early meetings a fair amount of time was spent with each member sharing what they knew about books that had helped them along the way. As new members join, they have new contributions to add and the older members can help them out with resources that have been valuable in the past.

The group has also influenced the subscription policy of the RDHS, which now subscribes to several genealogical publications that it never used to before the FHG was formed. This has proved to be a valuable way of spending the extra membership subscriptions that have come into the Society since 1988. I think it would be fair to say that the genealogical periodicals are borrowed with much greater frequency than the general run of books and magazines. The RDHS also has a large collection of genealogical microfiche and CD-ROMs that members can access.

The FHG was very dynamic in its second year, 1989, and included the following activities:

February	a visit to the Parramatta LDS library,
March	an address by Faye Young on library resources generally,
April	an excursion to Kingswood Repository,
July	an address by Portia Robinson on female convicts,
August	an address by Commander Swan of the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG),
September	an address by Trevor McLaughlin on Irish resources, and
November	an excursion to Kiama combining a tour of the district with research in the Family History Centre.

The law of diminishing returns would make one expect that this pace could not be maintained but 1990 was not much quieter. It included talks about the Australian Archives (now National Archives), shipping records, German records and the Land Titles Office (now Lands Department) and an excursion to the LDS library at Mortlake and another visit to Kingswood. The Society also began helping SAG with its headstone transcriptions of the Field of Mars Cemetery. As members of SAG, some of our members had also worked on transcribing at Rookwood and later at Waverley and South Head, but for most of us it was a new experience. The organiser, Laurel Burge, was very rigorous and dynamic and being a part of such a professionally run activity was a revelation to most of us. I helped a few times at Field of Mars and once or twice at Macquarie Park.

Subsequent years have settled down to a bit of a pattern, with meetings from February to November followed by a whole-Society Christmas Party on the second Saturday in December. The February meeting is usually a "members meeting" as are alternate meetings through the year. The other months have either a guest speaker or an excursion. Sometimes these excursions are to libraries or archives, sometimes they are a walking tour of a nearby suburb or attraction. One thing is constant: the people who participate enjoy themselves.

When the Society needs volunteers, the members of the FHG put their hands up with equal enthusiasm as the other members. In fact the Ryde District Historical Society is a remarkably unified organisation, given that it is supposed to have two different groups within it. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the formation of the Family History Group. Given the success of this "group within a group", I think there needs to be a celebration of some sort, perhaps on the second Saturday of July, the 12th.